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TAGS: PREL ETTC EFIN KTFN PTER UNSC
SUBJECT: UN/1267 SANCTIONS:AUSTRIANS PLAN CAUTIOUS START TO
CHAIRMANSHIP

Classified By: Political Counselor Jeffrey DeLaurentis for reasons 1.4
(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Experts responsible for managing Austria's chairmanship of the 1267 al-Qaeda/Taliban Sanctions Committee plan to focus the committee on outstanding tasks leftover from 2008 and not immediately introduce any new initiatives. Noting Austria's role as a "defender of human rights," their lead expert said she was already looking ahead to the December 2009 review of the 1267 sanctions regime as a chance for the regime to take "another step or two" in its evolution. USUN emphasized the great priority Washington places on the al-Qaeda/Taliban sanctions regime and requested close collaboration. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On January 13, the experts responsible for managing Austria's chairmanship of the 1267 al-Qaeda/Taliban Sanctions Committee told USUN that they want to focus the Committee initially on finishing outstanding tasks leftover from 2008. (NOTE: Three experts will assist Austrian UN Perm Rep Thomas Mayr-Harting in chairing the 1267 Committee: Tunde Huber (lead 1267 expert and assistant to the chair), Katja Wallner (attache) and Ulrike Kohler (assistant legal advisor). END NOTE). The Austrians said they hope to make progress fully implementing resolution 1822 (2008), which, among other things, tasked the Committee to draft "narrative summaries" of the reasons names were listed and to conduct a comprehensive review of all these names within two years. Huber said Austria would not immediately introduce "new projects or new ideas," since "the Committee already has enough work to do." She pledged Austria would be a neutral chair

¶3. (C) Huber acknowledged the "due process" critiques that have dogged the 1267 sanctions regime, as well as the European Court of Justice finding that the EU's implementation of 1267 sanctions violated human rights. (NOTE: Some critics have said that UN targeted sanctions procedures -- particularly those for listing and de-listing individuals -- are not fair and clear, and therefore violate the rights of designated individuals. END NOTE). In this context, she explained that "Austria has been a strong advocate of the rule of law and human rights" and noted that support for the rule of law was the principal rationale for Austria's candidacy to the Security Council. She said she looked ahead to the Council's next review of the 1267 sanctions regime in December 2009 as a chance for the regime to "take another step or two" in its evolution.

¶4. (C) USUN warmly welcomed Austria to the 1267 Committee and underscored the importance that Washington places on this sanctions regime. USUN also noted that frequent prior communication and collaboration between the United States and

the chair is essential to help prevent unwanted surprises in the Committee. The Austrians pledged a close working relationship.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The Austrians sought to reassure us that they do not have plans to propose immediate "enhancements" or modifications to the 1267 sanctions regime, such as a new independent review mechanism (a proposal floated by Liechtenstein, Switzerland and other European states) or additional human rights safeguards. Considering Austria's self-image as a rule of law defender, however, we expect the Austrians to devote increasing attention to addressing human rights critiques of the 1267 regime. END COMMENT.

Khalilzad